

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Teach For America Update

History/Background:

Existing Policy. Teach For America’s mission is to build the movement to eliminate educational inequity that persists along socioeconomic lines. The organization recruits outstanding recent college graduates and professionals who commit two years to teach in urban and rural areas and who become lifelong leaders in pursuing educational excellence and equity. With extensive training and support, Teach For America teachers (also called corps members) work relentlessly to ensure that students growing up in low-income communities are given the educational opportunities they deserve. Teach For America alumni are a powerful force of leaders who act on the conviction and insight they gain from their teaching experience—working in education and all other sectors to effect the fundamental changes needed to ensure that all children have an equal chance in life.

In 1989, Wendy Kopp proposed the creation of a national teacher corps in her senior thesis at Princeton University. Convinced that many accomplished recent college graduates seek work that offers significant responsibility and makes a real difference in the world, the 21-year-old Kopp raised \$2.5 million of start-up funding, hired a skeleton staff, and launched a grassroots recruiting campaign. During Teach For America’s first year in 1990, 500 teachers taught in six low-income communities. Today, Teach For America places more than 8,800 teachers in 43 regions, and our network includes over 25,000 alumni who have directly impacted the lives of more than three million students.

In the spring of 2011, Teach For America launched its 42nd region in eastern Kentucky. With the goal of helping districts find and retain great teachers, Teach For America-Appalachia set off to bring 90 corps members to the region throughout the first three years of operation. Today, 22 corps members are working in 8 districts across Appalachia. Efforts to grow the number of district partners and, thus, the number of Teach For America teachers in the region are already underway for the 2012-2013 school year and beyond.

Will Nash, Executive Director of Teach For America-Appalachia will attend the October Kentucky Board of Education meeting to provide more detail on Teach For America and its current efforts in Teach For America-Appalachia.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

High-quality teachers are essential to optimizing learning opportunities for all students.

Contact Person:

Terry Holliday
Commissioner
Kentucky Department of Education
502-564-3141
Terry.Holliday@education.ky.gov

Commissioner of Education

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